

Linda M. Gobler
President

6-01-05



Testimony on SB 189

Good morning Mr. Chariman and members of the committee. My name is Linda Gobler and I am president and CEO of the Michigan Grocers Association. We represent 1,000 retailers, wholesalers and suppliers, all actively engaged in the retail food business. I am here today to oppose SB 189, commonly referred to as the Meth Bill.

Our members, responsible legitimate business people, share your goals in finding ways to combat the problems faced by many communities with the illegal production of methamphetamines. We support reasonable restrictions on the sale of pseudoephedrine products. We support efforts to increase resources for local law enforcement agencies to combat meth problems and we wholeheartedly support increased fines and penalties for those who produce, manufacture or purchase products intended for illegal use. We do not, however, support legislation that turns our retailers into drug police.

Specifically, we find the following requirements problematic:

- Maintain all pseudoephedrine products behind a counter or install a video camera to record the customer every one out of ten seconds, at a minimum.
- Require the retailer to maintain the video tape for a minimum of 6 months. The industry standard is a 30-day retention period.
- Require the retailer to keep pseudoephedrine products within 20 feet of a service counter that is staffed, **at all times**, by one or two employees. The use of anti-theft devices are costly alternatives for retailers. Anti-theft equipment can cost up to \$75,000 per store to install.
- Require **all customers to sign a log**, to include their name, date of birth, amount and description of products purchased and maintain the log for 6 months in the event that law enforcement **may** request it.
- Post yet another sign in the store to remind customers that you must be 18 years old to purchase cold and flu medications and, if a video camera is used, state that the area is under constant video surveillance.

According to an analysis done by the American Legislative Exchange Council, (ALEC) "pseudoephedrine used in the large drug-cartel meth labs in Mexico and California that account for 80 percent of meth production does not come from cold and allergy medicine, but is imported or smuggled in bulk from manufacturers in Asia and Latin America. A successful reduction in small-time manufacture would simply increase the demand for methamphetamine supplied by the Mexican drug cartels. Instead of penalizing cold and allergy sufferers, we should combine reasonable measures to limit access to pseudoephedrine products in retail stores with aggressive efforts to reduce drug trafficking and equip communities to address factors that contribute at the local level to high rates of meth abuse."

We agree, and recommend the following actions:

- **Increase criminal penalties for producing and selling methamphetamine.**
- **End bail for those caught selling or producing methamphetamine.**
- **Increase funding for local law enforcement efforts to detect and shutdown illegal meth production labs.**
- **Curb mail order and Internet sales of pseudoephedrine.**
- **Support preemption of local ordinances.**
- **Support reasonable sales limits.**
- **Help educate communities through "Meth Watch" programs to learn to identify and curtail suspicious sales of pseudoephedrine.**

While we applaud the efforts of the legislature to rid our communities of the addictive and damaging production of meth, we ask you to not further burden the honest hardworking men and women in your community with additional state mandates and unnecessary paperwork. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

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